

REASONS
FOR THE
NECESSITY
OF
SILENT WAITING,
IN ORDER TO THE
SOLEMN WORSHIP OF GOD.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,
SEVERAL QUOTATIONS FROM
ROBERT BARCLAY'S APOLOGY.

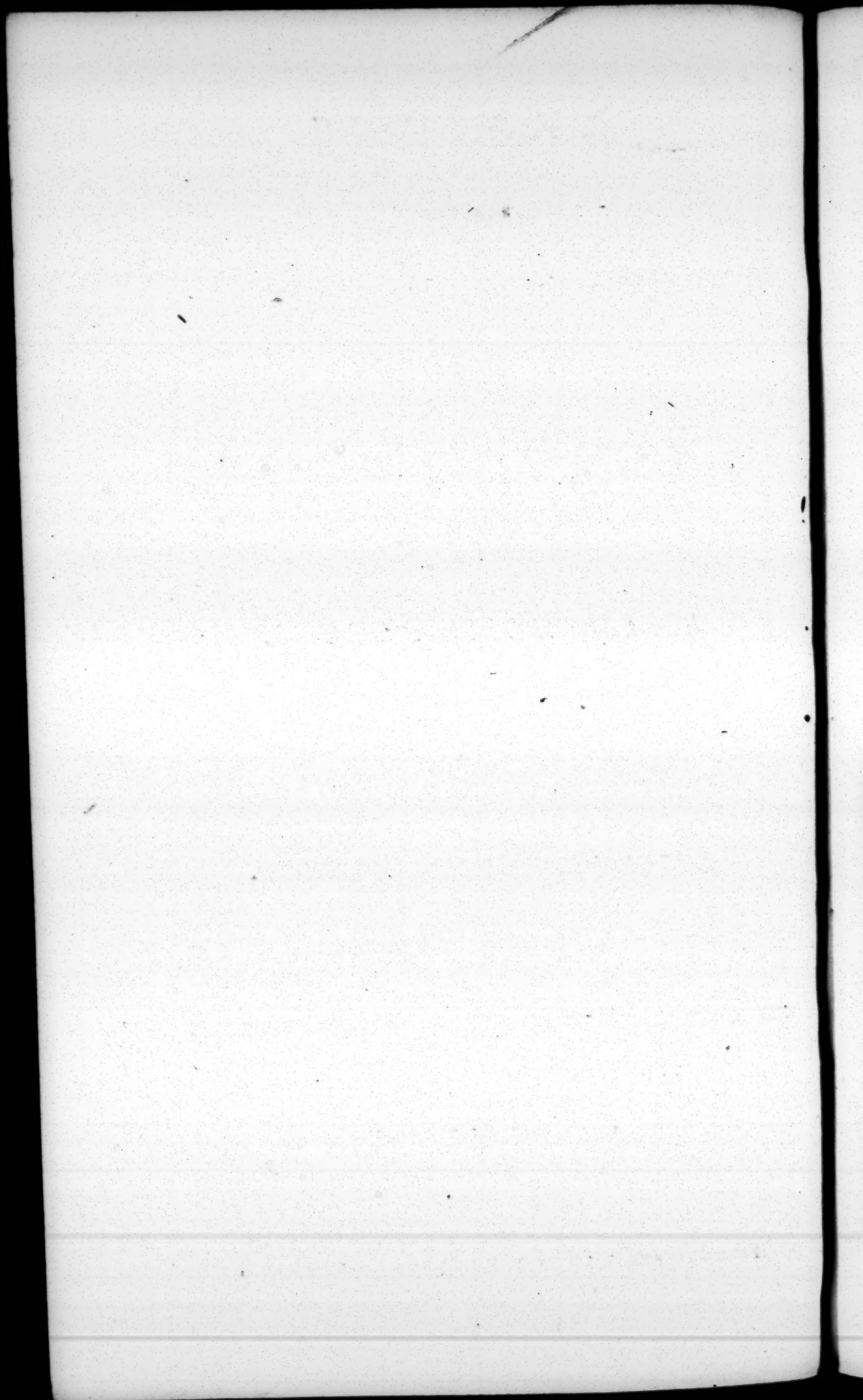
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REASONS
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NECESSITY
OF
SILENT WAITING,
&c.

IT is by the Spirit that believers have ^{Eph. 2.} access to the Father; and are not the ^{18.} impressions and influences of the Spirit to be felt and distinguished from the workings of our own carnal minds? If they are, ought not believers to wait patiently in silent submission of soul, in order to distinguish when the golden sceptre is stretched out, which gives liberty to approach the Sacred Presence? And must not the preparations of the heart by the Spirit make us sensible of our real wants, before we can ask aright; and also of our miserable state, before we can seek that relief

which is proper for us? Must not the Spirit likewise impart help and consolation to us, before we can rejoice in its salvation, praise the Lord on the banks of deliverance, and make sweet melody in our hearts unto him? Can we bow before him in true reverence and fear, in faith, till the Spirit hath mercifully begot these sensations in the soul? Must not the carnal mind, which is at enmity with God, be silenced in us before these impressions prevail over all? If we presume to approach him without the sensible drawings of his Spirit, may we not speak unadvisedly with our lips, and offer somewhat like the polluted sacrifice of the wicked, which is an abomination to him, and therefore cannot be acceptable from a disciple of Christ? To such the apostle saith, "It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Must we not consequently wait in silence till this will be raised in us, and power given us to perform a holy worship, and to offer an offering in righteousness?

Phil. 2.
13.

The influences of the Spirit are not at our command, circumscribed in our time, or limited by our wills, and therefore must be humbly waited for, seeing we can have no access without it; and if that in which
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all our spiritual ability and strength is, be not our own, nor at our command, but must be freely dispensed to us afresh by the great Giver, must we not submissively wait in silence for his qualifying power, by which alone we can move aright? Hence David, deeply sensible of his own inability, saith, Psal. lxii. 1. "Truly my soul waiteth upon (or, as in the margin, is silent before) God : from him cometh my salvation ;" and verse 5. "My soul, wait thou only upon God : for my expectation is from him."

Do not these remarks clearly point out the necessity of our patiently waiting upon the Lord in silence for renewed strength, that by the inward and powerful operations of his Spirit, he may pluck the feet of our minds out of the mire and clay of corrupt thoughts and carnal inclinations, and also beget a suitable concern and travail of spirit in us, that from the arising of a true spiritual exercise, the mouth may speak what the panting soul feels when it is athirst for God ; or, at least, be humbly sensible of those sighs and groans begotten therein by the Spirit, which cannot be uttered in words? Is not this concern and exercise wherein the soul is deeply engaged, and the judgment clearly con-

vinced, more acceptable to the all-seeing God, who calls for truth in the inward parts, than a multitude of fine unfelt expressions dropt from the lips, whilst the heart is wandering without due restraint, far from a sense of his presence? Nay, will not five words spoke from a good understanding under the influence of the Holy Spirit, have more weight with the Almighty, than five thousand uttered from a luke-warm, insensible, or careless mind? Can we suppose the infinitely wise Creator of all things is, like short-sighted man, either to be deceived or pleased with our much speaking? Our Lord saith, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the Heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him," Mat. vi. 7, 8.

The inspired prophet Isaiah, in the last verse of the fortieth chapter, saith, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." In the first verse of the next chapter immediately succeeding, he shews what is meant by waiting, in these words, "Keep silence before me, O islands! and let the people renew their strength." Certainly this silence imports the same thing
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as waiting in the former verse, seeing the same effect is attributed to both; and is not the carnal mind and corrupt imagination here commanded to keep silence before God, that the soul may properly wait and watch unto prayer? The prophet adds, "Let them come near, then let them speak." This also appears to call the immortal soul into deep silence, that therein it may first receive divine help to draw near in spirit to the great Jehovah, and then speak forth its humble petition, under a sense of that holy, solemn, awful reverence, which is due from a dependent creature in its approaches towards its Almighty Creator.

A certain minister of the church of England, * writing on the Common-Prayer, and the sentences placed at the beginning of the service, observes, "That
 " prayer requires so much attention and
 " serenity of mind, that it can never be
 " performed without some preceding preparation; for which reason," says he,
 " according to Bingham's Antiquities,
 " vol. 5. book 13. chap. 11, 12. when the
 " Jews enter into their synagogues to

* Charles Wheatly, M. A. Vicar of Brent and Turner's Pelham in Hertfordshire.

“ pray, they remain silent for some time,
 “ and meditate before whom they stand.”
 Can we think such a reverent practice amongst Christians would not be more suitable and acceptable to him, who need not be told what we are, than the too common custom of hastily approaching his Sacred Presence, and presuming to speak to him without previous recollection, and due consideration before whom they stand?

Ecclef.
 5. 1.

“ Keep thy foot,” saith Solomon, “ when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools : for they consider not that they do evil.” If caution and consideration were requisite under the law of Moses, which made nothing perfect as pertaining to the conscience, how much more is it so under the gospel dispensation, which more directly requires that the Lord be worshipped in spirit and in truth ; not feignedly with the lip only, but with the whole heart spiritually exercised? What foot is this that must be kept in such subjection? Is it only the foot of the body, and not rather the hasty forwardness of the carnal mind, that the attention of the soul may become fixed upon God, the fountain of all spiritual strength and living mercies,
 who

John 4.
 23.

who must teach our hearts to pray, if ever we pray effectually?

Isaiah saith, "Thou wilt keep him in I sai. 26. perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on³ thee, because he trusteth in thee." Can any thing be more consistent with a silent dependent waiting, than a mind stayed upon God, in a sincere confidence and firm expectation of Divine Help; and if it behoves a Christian to have his mind thus frequently stayed upon the Divine Power, how much more in solemn worship, and near approaches to the Sacred Presence, who cannot possibly be deceived, or amused by the arts of composition, or the powers of human eloquence; and who has passed a sentence of condemnation on the too common practice of drawing near Ibid. 29. to him with the mouth, and honouring¹³ him with the lips, whilst the heart is far from him? How can the soul any way be more uninterruptedly stayed upon him, than in a silent waiting for Divine Help, and the renewings of spiritual power, under a solid attention to hear what he shall reveal unto it, as its present duty?

Christ saith, "My sheep hear my John 10. voice;" and, he further declares, "they^{27. 4. 5.} know his voice, and a stranger will they

John 15.
3.

not follow." Now, what partakes more of the stranger's voice than self-will and self-sufficiency in divine service? "Without me," saith the Lord to his disciples, "ye can do nothing." That is nothing really and substantially good, or acceptable to God; because himself is the Lord from heaven, the second Adam, the quickening spirit, without whose influence all we offer is void of spirit or life. He is that inexhaustible fountain of power and wisdom, of vital holiness, and saving health to the soul, which, like the sap that ariseth from the root of the vine, is the life and nourishment of every branch. Such is the sensible connection of Christ, the true head of the church, with the several members of his spiritual body: they are dependent upon him, as the branch is on the vine, both for life, and the daily supply of spiritual nourishment of that life which is hid with Christ in God; how therefore can they pray as they ought, in a spirit and manner suitable to their present wants, till he open their hearts, and teach them, by the wisdom of his Spirit, what to pray for? If left to themselves, may they not ask amiss, and consequently not receive? How can the ministers of the everlasting gospel communicate the will of God, till they receive illumination
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and ability from his Spirit, to speak profitably to the present states of the people? How can any come to the throne of Divine Grace without his immediate help and influence? What can raise the fallen soul up to God-ward, and humble it in due prostration before him, give it a deep sense of its wants, and of the riches of his love and mercy, but the Holy Spirit itself? How necessary then, and reasonable it is, that we should patiently wait in submissive silence, for the enlightenings and quickenings of its heavenly power, to guide both heart and tongue in addressing the Holy One of Israel? David saith, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God! thou wilt not despise." What but his heart-humbling Spirit can prepare this sacrifice in the soul? If no power but his can do this, must we not consequently watch and wait in silence to receive its assistance, and have the impressions of the Spirit before we can pray with the Spirit, and with a right understanding also? And seeing the Lord is a God of knowledge, and that by him our actions are weighed, how careful should we be to know what spirit governs and influenceth our souls in his solemn worship!

Ecclef.
5. 2.

Solomon, under an awful sense of the Divine Greatness and Majesty, affords us this necessary caution when we present ourselves before him : " Be not rash with thy mouth." This every one certainly is, who presumes to speak to the Most High before he hath duly considered in whose presence he is. He adds, " Let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God : for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few." This plainly inculcates how much it behoves us to have a reverent sense of the majesty and purity of the Supreme Searcher of hearts, and to be deeply humbled into a feeling of our inability and nothingness, before we address him with our lips.

If it is not in man's power duly to prepare his own heart, and yet it is his indispensable duty deeply and reverently to worship the Author of his being in spirit and in truth, how necessary must an awful silence be, that he may know his soul prepared by the immediate hand of God, to approach him acceptably ! On the contrary, how inconsiderate, hasty, or presumptuous is the practice of uttering words to him, which the heart doth not understand, or of confessing a state it never sensibly experienced ! Certainly, if we believe the
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the Lord is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity with approbation, we must conclude, he is more jealous of his honour than to accept of such dissimulation. Is not an humble, conscientious, silent waiting in submission, to be influenced and led by him, abundantly preferable in his sight? Then how much more the sighs and expressions that proceed from a real heart-affecting sense of his greatness and omnipresence, and of the lowness and unworthiness of the creature that considers itself as dust and ashes before him! Doth not such a weighty sense of our meanness and inability of ourselves to offer any thing pleasing to him, who is an infinite Spirit superlatively glorious, unless he first condescend graciously to help our infirmities, and teach us to pray as we ought, discover more true regard, and real concern of heart, to offer up a spiritual sacrifice that may be acceptable, through Jesus Christ the great Mediator, who never can intercede with the Father to accept an insincere hypocritical offering, a barely drawing near to him with the tongue, and honouring him with the lips, whilst the heart is insensible of his fear, and amused with other objects? Is it not more safe and rational to wait in silence upon the Lord, than thus to deceive our souls with sparks of our own

own kindling, warming vain and foolish self with a fire of its own lighting, instead of placing our expectation upon him, who alone can teach his people rightly to profit, and enable them to pray with the Spirit, and with a right understanding also?

There is an essential difference betwixt praying in reality as the Spirit shall teach us, and praying in form as men and books advise us. Those who pray under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, pray with additional fervency, knowing their attention fixed on God alone; their understandings are opened into a true discerning of their spiritual wants, and their souls quickened to a lively, humble, sincere worship; wherein their spirits are refreshed, and gain strength in the Lord, and in the power of his might. On the other hand, men and books may furnish with fair seemings and plausible expressions, but they cannot effect that brokenness of spirit, that contrition of heart, and sensibility of soul which the Spirit of God gives. They may teach to say, Lord! Lord! whilst Satan rules in the will and affections, and carries the imaginations after divers vanities; for nothing less than the power of the Spirit can subdue and chain down the carnal mind. How necessary then is an humble waiting in silence, truly to know what spirit we are

are of, before we offer any thing to the living God? Without this knowledge we must be liable to offer strange fire, which the Lord never commanded, like the sons of Aaron, who, through negligence having suffered the holy fire, divinely kindled, to go out, presented a strange fire of man's kindling, for which they suffered death. Ought not this expressive instance of divine displeasure against the presumptuous substitutions of men after their own wills, and in the place of God's appointment, to deter mankind from offering their own carnal conceptions and contrivances, instead of his inward and spiritual requirings? Ought not this consideration to strike every one with a deep and awful sense, that something more is due to the great Jehovah, than those common, careless, unfelt modes of worship which too many are apt to satisfy themselves with; and more especially as he hath declared, "I will be sanctified in them that come Lev. 10. nigh me?" How can he be sanctified in ^{3.} us, but as his own pure Spirit awfully prevails in the soul, puts it forth in humility, and influenceth the will and affections by its holy quickening energy?

If Christ is indeed our Lord, why are not we more seriously concerned to honour him

him in our hearts? If he is our master, why do we not so fear his displeasure, as to endeavour, with all diligence, to walk circumspectly, not as fools, inattentive to his leadings; but as wise, seeking to redeem the time, because the days are evil?

Zech. 2. The Spirit, by the mouth of Zechariah, saith, "Be silent, O all flesh! before the Lord; for he is raised up out of his holy habitation." Is not a modest humble silence properly due to the presence of the King of kings, and Lord of lords? Doth it not bespeak more real and awful regard to his perfect holiness, wisdom and power, to wait for his Spirit to open our hearts and lips, before we attempt vocally to speak forth his praise, than to be hasty in uttering words without true knowledge before our all-seeing Judge? Then how approvable is the practice of solemn silent waiting, till we receive illumination and ability properly to worship the Almighty! Would the potentates of the earth think themselves treated with becoming reverence, should their subjects and servants immediately approach them with a multitude of words, and continue them the whole time they stand in their presence, instead of waiting silently to hear their pleasure, and receive their commands?

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How much less ought we to expect such behaviour is pleasing, or acceptable from us, to him who searches all hearts, and knows us better than we know ourselves? to whom we must be indebted for the true knowledge of every spiritual want, before we can have wisdom to ask aright according to his will!

When the prophet *Isaiah* was admitted, in a vision, to behold the glorious Majesty of God, he could only cry, "Woe is me!" *Isa. 6.* till a live coal from the holy altar had touched his lips, and purged away his sin. What a deep reverence of his Maker, and just abhorrence of self filled his humbled mind, when he was favoured with this awful sight of the supreme glory! How self-abasing were his sensations, and emphatical his expressions, when he cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips! and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!" How different is this heartfelt acknowledgment, proceeding from the powerful convictions of the Holy Spirit, to those dry, formal, unfelt words that come from the lips of bare nominal Christians! Notwithstanding every disciple hath not so large a portion of the Holy Spirit,

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as this great prophet had, yet every one is graciously favoured with a measure sufficient to render his offering spiritual and living.

Acts 2.
1. 4. We read, that after the ascension of Christ, his disciples “were all with one accord in one place, when they were filled with the Holy Ghost.” Though the text doth not expressly say, they were waiting in silence for the promise of the Father, yet it appears as probable they were, as that they were not; for there is no mention of any vocal exercise amongst them at that time, before they were influenced thereunto by that peculiar communication and impulse of the Holy Ghost, whence “they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” The attention is certainly more likely to be fixed upon, and stayed in true watchfulness towards, the Lord, and the mind more fitly prepared to receive the influence of his divine light and power, in silent waiting, than if agitated in a continual practice of running over a multitude of unfelt expressions.

David, by inspiration, personating the
Psal. 46. Most High, saith, “Be still, and know
10.
Hab. 2. that I am God!” The prophet Habakkuk
20. also

also saith, "The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him!" Is not the carnal mind of man included in this prohibition? What is more likely to scatter and divert his attention from the right object, than thoughts, imaginations, and propensities of an earthly or sensual nature? What more dishonourable to the Lord of perfection and purity, than the busy forward actings of an unprepared and corrupt heart in spiritual things? What is more necessary to be silenced than that which is at enmity with God? What more becoming an humble dependent creature, sensible of the depravity of its nature, of its inability to do any good, and of the honour due to the presence of its Creator, than a deeply expressive solemn silence before him?

Our Lord Jesus Christ, taught his disciples to avoid the practice of hypocrites, "who love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men." He also directed, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the Heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking;" and indeed, what now makes a greater shew or figure in religion amongst many, than to use long and frequent

Mat. 6.
5, 6, 7

quent prayers, and much formal devotion, as if their eye was more towards the praise of men than acceptance with God, and as if they gloried in empty appearances? But

Mat. 6. what is the precept of Christ? "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." Doth not this teach us, that before we approach the Fountain of all wisdom, to shut out every thing that would amuse or divert the attention from the reverence due to the great object of our adoration, the Giver of every good and perfect gift? Can we be too solid, or feel our hearts, affections, and desires, too much gathered out of transitory things, into a humbling sense of the Divine Presence, when we apply ourselves to the solemn act of worshipping the Majesty on high?

Since waiting upon God in silence for renewed strength and spiritual wisdom, to lead our hearts and direct our tongues in vocal prayer, or preaching, makes no ostentatious shew, but rather appears contemptible to the busy disposition and wisdom of vain man, it is not reasonable to suppose, that this self-denying practice should

should gain the approbation or praise of men; yet it must evidently tend to prevent that great and offensive hypocrisy, of drawing near to the Lord with the tongue, and worshipping him with the lips, whilst the heart is far from him. Can there be any frame more fit or proper for the poor soul, wherein to hear the still small voice of the true internal Shepherd, than that of an attentive and submissive silent waiting?

Waiting upon God is abundantly recommended in holy writ, and waiting in silence necessarily implied in order to hear his voice. "My sheep," saith the great ^{John 10} Shepherd, "hear my voice." When is ²⁷ the soul so capable of hearing the quickening language of his Spirit, as in a state of silent watching for, and waiting to hear what he shall give it an understanding of, and engage it in, as its requisite and reasonable duty, by the illuminating virtue and enlivening power of his holy influence?

Our Lord forbids us to use vain repetitions; and what efficacy can those prayers have, which are made in the will, and by the contrivance of man, or that are uttered either from books, invention, or memory,

memory, whilst the heart neither feels the thing the mouth speaks, nor ever experienced what the tongue declares? What are these but vain repetitions and empty sounds? Whilst people remain insensible of the real condition of their souls, and of the true self-abasing fear of God, do they not seem to think that they shall be heard for their much speaking, if they content themselves with the frequent repetition of long lifeless prayers, which they have not so much as weightily considered before they uttered them? Is this to worship the Father in spirit and in truth; the only worship instituted by Christ in this gospel-day, and therefore the only worship acceptable to God, who is a Spirit? Can this spiritual worship be performed till the soul feels its operation awfully to humble, engage, and empower the mind to this solemn act? What but the Spirit of the Redeemer is able to awaken and stir up the immortal soul, and endue it with wisdom and utterance, suitably to express itself, according to and under a due sense of its wants?

Christ in Spirit, is the way, or leading power, to the Father: no man can come to the Father but by him. What is the reason why so many, who profess to be followers

lowers of Christ, complain of wandering thoughts, inattention, much coldness, deadness, and insensibility in prayer, and other duties and devotions? Is it not because they are too little dependent on the dictates of the Spirit, and believe not its sensible influence necessary to every religious act, nor wait for it to cleanse the thoughts of their hearts, and abilitate them to approach the Most High and Holy God in truth and righteousness? Is it not because such lean too much to their own unsubjected wisdom and understanding, to place their dependence on the Spirit, and to wait for its restraining heart-affecting power to lead them into all truth, and therefore are sent empty away, and no more truly refreshed or benefited by their lifeless devotions, than he who dreams he eateth, but when he awakes, perceives he is yet empty? Thus they ask and receive not, because they ask amiss; not in a right frame, but in a lukewarm and unconcerned state of mind. The enemy is too strong for such worshippers, and carries their thoughts and imaginations after strange objects, while their lips only approach the Almighty. One secret prayer, or deep sigh from the wrestling soul, produced by the Eternal Spirit, is of more real service to it, issues from

from it with more fervour, prevails more effectually with the Father, and procures it more refreshment than ten thousand vain repetitions; because the virtue of the Spirit of the great Intercessor being in these prayers and sighs, they cannot but find acceptance.

Doth not the common complaint of wanderings in time of prayer, from those who oppose silent waiting for the divine assistance of the Spirit, to speak or pray according to the will of God, prove the necessity of such a practice, in order to worship the Father in spirit and in truth?

Mat. 6. 8. Our blessed Redeemer saith, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before you ask him." How requisite therefore is it, that he open our understandings, shew us our true conditions, discover to us our spiritual wants, and enable us to present our petitions according to his will, before we can sensibly ask for the necessary supplies, or cry Abba, Father; and for this end, how incumbent it is upon us silently to wait for his immediate help and direction!

Psal. 51. 12, 13. David saith, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit: then (not before) will I teach transgressors

transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." This shews, he placed his dependence upon the renewed influence of the Holy Spirit, and that he held no former experiences, however good in themselves, sufficient qualifications for divine service in the time present. He knew, that nothing short of a fresh supply from the Fountain of living virtue, could properly enable him to preach to others; and therefore prayed, "Open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise."

The apostle Paul saith, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." By this just acknowledgment it appears, the exercise of a mind deeply affected is more than words can express, therefore it speaks to God in unutterable groans: a thing much despised and scoffed at by many professors in this age. We see, however, the apostle was not ashamed to own it to be what himself and his brethren experienced to be true; which shews the sense they had of their own natural inability and blindness, and also their firm dependence upon the Holy Spirit, with-

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out which they knew not what to pray for as they ought; and therefore found a necessity to wait for its renewals upon them, before they could either pray for themselves, or preach to others profitably, and with divine acceptance. How can we at this day presume to know what to pray for as we ought without the sensible help of the Holy Spirit, if this great apostle and his brethren did not? Yet, is there not ground for suspicion, from the common practice of professing Christians now, that they do not think themselves at a loss what to pray for acceptably; and therefore presumptuously offer their invented supplications, without due fear and caution, to him who looketh at the heart; and remain insensible of the necessity of feeling the Holy Spirit to disengage them from roving thoughts, and concerns of a temporal nature, and to communicate of that discerning wisdom and living power, which is requisite to direct their hearts and tongues aright.

But notwithstanding a previous waiting upon God is so much despised, the apostle intimates, that the groanings of the Spirit are effectual without vocal sounds; which proves there is an inward address deeper than the expression of words, which is
heard

heard and accepted of God. Let me add, that Jesus himself applied to the Father in this manner, when he groaned in the Spirit twice, and afterwards lift up his eyes, and before he called Lazarus out of the grave, said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." This shews his fervent groans were accepted, and his request granted, without audible expressions; and doth not the compassionate Father still regard the groans begotten by the Spirit of his Son in the hearts of his followers? Indeed there is much efficacy in groans that arise from this living principle.

John 11.
33, 38.
41.

The apostle Paul saith, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.—If the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." When do Christians more need these quickenings than in their assemblies for divine worship; and how must they distinguish them, except they wait in silence? Is it an unwarrantable presumption, humbly to wait in expectation of the promised assistance, to enable us sensibly to worship freely, livingly, and powerfully, which cannot be, unless

Rom. 8.
9. 11.

the Spirit of Christ is our helper? If these internal quickenings be the continued privilege of Christ's disciples, and if it is to the virtue thereof that all our services owe their efficacy and acceptance, can it be right or safe to run before, and without that which is the very life of true prayer and preaching? If not, there is an absolute necessity for, and certainly great propriety in waiting patiently for it, in submissive silence, that the sacrifice may be of the Lord's preparing; and that it may be offered according to his will, under the immediate conduct of his own pure Spirit. Thus qualified, we pray with the Spirit and with understanding also; which prayer must consequently profit and refresh the thirsty soul; and if a silent attention had neither any express command, nor example in scripture, it is necessarily implied in many parts of it, as well as in the nature of true spiritual worship.

Is not the Almighty a most pure and perfectly glorious Being, dwelling in the light, whom no man can approach unto, but by the Spirit of the Mediator? and is not man absolutely dependent on the merciful goodness and power of his Creator? and is it not reasonable that such a creature

creature should be made deeply sensible to whom he must be indebted for all spiritual ability, as well as temporal favours, before he can approach the Sacred Presence with becoming reverence? and in what state is he so likely to be made sensible of this, as under an abstraction of mind from earthly cogitations and concerns, into a silent attention upon the omnipresent Spirit?

These things duly considered, is it just and reasonable to censure and despise any people for conscientiously waiting upon God in silence, and frequently falling into such an heart-engaging exercise of spirit in his fear, as cannot often be uttered in words, and consequently must be experienced in silence? Who can seriously think, that he who saith, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word," will not hear and regard, when many hearts are collectively bowed before him under an unfeigned concern and travail of spirit; when the soul worships before him more deeply than can be expressed by lip or tongue? What are the finest words and fairest forms to him who respecteth not the outward shew, but the inward frame of the heart,

Isai. 66.
2.

if they do not convey the sincere feeling language thereof?

2 Cor. 3.
5, 6.

The apostle utterly disclaims all self-sufficiency: "Not saith he, that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

Ibid. 4.
7.

The virtue and excellence of the Christian religion is justly ascribed to the Holy Spirit. The same apostle declares, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Therefore Christ hath instituted no other worship under the new covenant, but that which is performed in spirit and in truth; and how can we perform this till we have a sense of the Spirit, and feel the virtue of its influence engaging our souls in truth to this spiritual worship? And how can we attain this feeling, without patiently waiting in silence for its powerful assistance?

If the primitive Christians were of themselves so insufficient to think any thing, or to point out to themselves their own line of duty according to the divine will,

will, they certainly could not of themselves pray or preach to others consistent therewith, and therefore were obliged to wait for the renewals of light and ability from the Holy Spirit wherein their sufficiency was. If the case was such with them, is it less so with us? It certainly is not; for we are under the same dispensation, and altogether as insufficient of ourselves, as they could be. It is therefore now as requisite for us, as it could then be for them, to wait for divine direction and help, to give us a true sense both of our state and duty, and to enable us to the performance of it; and how can we reasonably expect to receive the assistance of the Spirit, but by humbly watching, and waiting in silence for its appearance and operation in our souls?

The heavenly influence of the Holy Spirit is the very life and glory of the gospel-dispensation, and is now as surely distinguished by experienced minds, as it was in the primitive age; else why was it promised to abide as the guide and leader of true believers; and why doth the apostle exhort "to pray always with all supplication in the spirit, and to watch thereunto with all perseverance?" Eph. 6.
18.

Rom. 8. 1. We read, that after the opening of the seventh seal, "there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." If silent worship is such an absurdity, as to be made the subject of ridicule, how came it to be found and allowed of in heaven? Was not the great God then obeyed, and adored there as profoundly as when they sang hallelujahs? If so, why should an awful silent waiting upon him be treated by any, as unprofitable and inconsistent with divine worship? Why should any prefer the modes and forms their own hearts have devised, or ignorantly espoused, to a solemn submissive waiting in silence, to know the true state of the soul, and to receive the blessed counsel of the Spirit, before they proceed vocally to address the Dread of Nations, or presume to preach as in his name, and declare any thing as his will, whose all-seeing eye is continually upon them?

Job. 32. 8. Elihu plainly expresseth, "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." When is the most likely time to be made sensible of this inspiration? That in which the mind is attentively waiting upon him in a profound and passive silence; or that wherein

wherein it is amused and busied with a multitude of words and ideas, on various subjects? What avails praying or preaching without this communicated understanding? Can it be any better than sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal? When people presume to pray without a sense of their real wants, and confess a state to the omniscient Being they never truly felt, and also petition for those spiritual favours and divine sensations they seek not to feel, do they not act as if they concluded, he will accept of an insincere devotion, and that he is not so jealous of his honour, as the sacred writings declare he is?

Besides the many scriptures in favour of a patient dependence upon and silent waiting for the quickening power of the Spirit, to give us a true sense of our wants, and bring to our remembrance the great obligations we are under to the mercy and goodness of God, there is also a cloud of witnesses, who have experimentally profited, and edified much more in silence than they ever did before they were in the practice of it; who, I believe, can say in truth and righteousness, that when the just judgments of an offended God were heavy upon them for transgression, and their tribula-

tions were inexpressible, through strong heart-breaking convictions of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and they lay groaning under it daily in wretchedness, without finding any help or deliverance from all their own workings, their many and long prayers, and self-righteousness; then it pleased the merciful Redeemer to open a way for them gradually into humble stillness, and to reveal his Son in them, as the precious Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. This blessed discovery raised them out of their distresses, and enabled them to say, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour; for he hath regarded the low estate of his servant." This inclined them to sit willingly at his feet in silence, and gladly to receive his pouring forth of the wine and oil into their bleeding wounds, till he healed their backslidings, and forgave their transgressions. For, "if we confess our sins (from a real abhorrence of sin) he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Who can declare the sweet consolation such have felt, who believe in his name as sufficient to purge the conscience from dead works, and enable them to serve him in newness of

1 John
1. 9.

of life? Truly, they have experienced that testimony of David fulfilled in their own hearts, "I waited patiently," saith he, "for ^{Psalms.} the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and ^{40. 1, 2.} heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock." Thus they were brought out of darkness into light, and came to know, that whereas they had been spiritually blind, now, by the grace of God they had received their sight, and by this power of discerning, learn not to trust to themselves, or their own works, but attentively to watch, and silently to wait, both to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches, and what it requires of them in their own particulars, that by its heavenly power every thought might be brought into the obedience of Christ. Thus they have been taught, and do certainly know, that no man can come to the Father, but by him; nor that any can sufficiently see their own sins, truly repent, effectually cry for deliverance, or rejoice in his salvation, but as his saving power is exercised in them, and their minds become subjected thereunto. This is the power they have learnt to wait for, and depend upon; in which dependent state they meet with the Lord as a quick-
ening

ening Spirit, hear him instruct them with convincing clearness, and feel his presence to impart fresh life and strength to their souls; for he still speaks in his spiritual manifestation, as he did in his bodily appearance, with divine authority, and as never man spoke; and is the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him. These can experimentally say, that he is come to teach his people himself, and that he is made unto them wisdom, to direct their steps in the way to the kingdom; righteousness, to clothe their spirits; their sanctification and complete redemption; as they are concerned not only to receive him in the beginning as their Lord and Saviour, but also to grow up and persevere in the power of the Spirit, earnestly desiring to be rooted and built up in its divine nature, and established in the true faith. The Lord alone can profitably apply the precious promises to the poor soul, as he leads it through the various progressive states to which the promises belong; by whose guidance his faithful followers are brought to escape the corruptions that are in the world, and measurably to become partakers of the divine nature.

Christ

Christ dwells in the hearts of these by faith, as the holy, powerful, appointed minister of the sanctuary and true tabernacle, which God hath pitched, and not man. He not only teacheth infallibly and convincingly, but also raiseth a hunger and thirst after a closer union with himself, and a fuller possession and enjoyment of his everlasting righteousness. Those who have attained this experience, cannot but esteem the time well spent in silently waiting for his instruction what to pray for, and that he may open their understandings to discern their present duty, and how to apply the sacred writings to real profit; and also to commemorate what great things he has mercifully done for their needy souls, both without and within them. This frequently melts them into tears of unaffected contrition, and humble gratitude; in which state they can adore his goodness, and put up their petitions without a prayer-book, and often without any vocal sound; for he is then known to be in his temple, and the earthly part is in perfect silence before him. What sober person, who considers how awful a thing it is to worship the great Jehovah in spirit and truth, can lightly censure or disapprove of such a silent dependence on his power,

to

Psal. 37.
 7.
 & 27.
 14.

to help the poor creature under its manifold infirmities? "Rest in the Lord," saith David, or as in the margin, "Be silent to the Lord, and wait patiently for him; wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord."

ROBERT BARCLAY, in his Apology for the true Christian Divinity, as held forth by the people called Quakers, has wrote so clearly on the subject in his eleventh proposition, that a few quotations from this author may serve to illustrate the foregoing reasons, and confirm the testimonies of many experimental witnesses on the subject, and profitableness of solemn silence.

IN his proposition on worship, in sect. 6. he has these remarks: " We judge it the
 " duty of all to be diligent in the assembling of themselves together, and when
 " assembled, the great work of one and all ought to be to wait upon God; and
 " returning out of their own thoughts and imaginations, to feel the Lord's
 " presence, and know a gathering into his name indeed, where he is in the
 " midst, according to his promise. And
 " as every one is thus gathered, and so met together inwardly in their spirits,
 " as well as outwardly in their persons,
 " there the secret power and virtue of
 " life

“ life is known to refresh the soul, and
 “ the pure motions and breathings of
 “ God’s Spirit are felt to arise; from
 “ which, as words of declaration, prayers
 “ or praises arise, the acceptable worship
 “ is known, which edifies the church,
 “ and is well-pleasing to God. And no
 “ man here limits the Spirit of God, nor
 “ bringeth forth his own conned and ga-
 “ thered stuff; but every one puts that
 “ forth which the Lord puts into their
 “ hearts: and it is uttered forth not in
 “ man’s will and wisdom, but in the evi-
 “ dence and demonstration of the Spirit
 “ and of power. Yea, though there be
 “ not a word spoken, yet is the true spi-
 “ ritual worship performed, and the body
 “ of Christ edified; yea, it may, and hath
 “ often fallen out among us, that divers
 “ meetings have passed without one word;
 “ and yet our souls have been greatly edi-
 “ fied and refreshed, and our hearts won-
 “ derfully overcome with the secret sense
 “ of God’s power and Spirit, which, with-
 “ out words, hath been ministered from
 “ one vessel to another. This is indeed
 “ strange and incredible to the mere na-
 “ tural and carnally-minded man, who
 “ will be apt to judge all time lost where
 “ there is not something spoken that is
 “ obvious

" obvious to the outward senses; and
 " therefore I shall insist a little upon this
 " subject, as one that can speak from a
 " certain experience, and not by mere
 " hearsay, of this wonderful and glorious
 " dispensation; which hath so much the
 " more of the wisdom and glory of God
 " in it, as it is contrary to the nature of
 " man's spirit, will, and wisdom."

He also in sect. 7. on silent waiting on
 God, expresses himself thus: " For many
 " thus principled, meeting together in
 " the pure fear of the Lord, did not
 " apply themselves presently to speak,
 " pray, or sing, &c. being afraid to be
 " found acting forwardly in their own
 " wills, but each made it their work to
 " retire inwardly to the measure of grace
 " in themselves, not being only silent as
 " to words, but even abstaining from all
 " their own thoughts, imaginations, and
 " desires; so watching in a holy depen-
 " dence upon the Lord, and meeting to-
 " gether not only outwardly in one place,
 " but thus inwardly in one Spirit, and in
 " one name of Jesus, which is his power
 " and virtue, they come thereby to enjoy
 " and feel the arisings of this life, which,
 " as it prevails in each particular, be-
 " comes

“ comes as a flood of refreshment, and
 “ overspreads the whole meeting : for
 “ man, and man’s part and wisdom, being
 “ denied and chained down in every indi-
 “ vidual, and God exalted, and his grace
 “ in dominion in the heart ; thus his name
 “ comes to be one in all, and his glory
 “ breaks forth, and covers all ; and there
 “ is such a holy awe and reverence upon
 “ every soul, that if the natural part should
 “ arise in any, or the wise part, or what is
 “ not one with the life, it would presently
 “ be chained down and judged out. And
 “ when any are, through the breaking
 “ forth of this power, constrained to ut-
 “ ter a sentence of exhortation or praise,
 “ or to breathe to the Lord in prayer,
 “ then all are sensible of it ; for the life in
 Prov. 17. “ them answers to it, as in water face an-
 19. “ swereth to face. This is that divine
 “ and spiritual worship, which the world
 “ neither knoweth nor understandeth, which
 “ the vulture’s eye seeth not into. Yet
 “ many and great are the advantages
 “ which my soul, with many others, hath
 “ tasted of hereby, and which would be
 “ found of all such as would seriously apply
 “ themselves hereunto : for, when people
 “ are gathered thus together, not merely
 “ to

“ to hear men, nor depend upon them,
 “ but all are inwardly taught to stay their Ifa. 10.
 “ minds upon the Lord, and wait for his 20. &
 “ appearance in their hearts; thereby the 26. 3.
 “ forward working of the spirit of man is
 “ stayed and hindered from mixing itself
 “ with the worship of God.”——

In sect. 15. after having described the
 true worship in spirit established by Christ,
 and clearly proved the necessity and advan-
 tage of it, he proceeds thus: “ He hath
 “ also instituted an inward and spiritual
 “ worship: so that God now tieth not his
 “ people to the temple of Jerusalem, nor
 “ yet unto outward ceremonies and obser-
 “ vations; but taketh the heart of every
 “ Christian for a temple to dwell in; and
 “ there immediately appeareth, and giveth
 “ him directions how to serve him in any
 “ outward acts. Since, as Christ argueth,
 “ God is a Spirit, he will now be wor-
 “ shipped in the spirit, where he reveals
 “ himself, and dwelleth with the contrite
 “ in heart. Now, since it is the heart of
 “ man that now is become the temple of
 “ God, in which he will be worshipped,
 “ and no more in particular outward tem-
 “ ples; since, as blessed Stephen said out
 of

“ of the prophet, to the professing Jews of
 “ old, The Most High dwelleth not in
 “ temples made with hands. As before
 “ the glory of the Lord descended to fill
 “ the outward temple, it behoved to be
 “ purified and cleansed, and all polluted
 “ stuff removed out of it; yea, and the
 “ place for the tabernacle was overlaid
 “ with gold, the most precious and clean-
 “ est of metals; so also before God be
 “ worshipped in the inward temple of the
 “ heart, it must also be purged of its own
 “ filth, and all its own thoughts and
 “ imaginations, that so it may be fit to re-
 “ ceive the Spirit of God, and to be
 “ actuated by it. And doth not this
 “ directly lead us to that inward silence,
 “ of which we have spoken, and exactly
 “ pointed out? And further, this worship
 “ must be in truth; intimating, that this
 “ spiritual worship, thus actuated, is only
 “ and properly a true worship.”——

“ Franciscus Lambertus,” as quoted by
 Robert Barclay, in sect. 18. “ speaketh
 “ well, tract. 5. of prophecy, chap. 3.
 “ saying, Where are they now that glory
 “ in their inventions, who say, A fine
 “ invention! A fine invention! This they
 “ call invention, which themselves have
 “ made

“ made up ; but what have the faithful
 “ to do with such kind of inventions ? It
 “ is not figments, nor yet inventions, that
 “ we will have, but things that are solid,
 “ invincible, eternal, and heavenly ; not
 “ which men have invented, but which
 “ God hath revealed : for if we believe
 “ the scriptures, our invention profiteth
 “ nothing, but to provoke God to our
 “ ruin. And afterwards, * Beware (saith
 “ he) that thou determine not precisely
 “ to speak what before thou hast medi-
 “ tated, whatsoever it be ; for though it
 “ be lawful to determine the text which
 “ thou art to expound, yet not at all the
 “ interpretation ; lest if thou so dost, thou
 “ take from the Holy Spirit that which
 “ is his, to wit, to direct thy speech, that
 “ thou mayest prophesy in the name of
 “ the Lord, void of all learning, medi-
 “ tation, and experience, and as if thou
 “ hadst studied nothing at all, commit-
 “ ting thy heart, thy tongue, and thyself
 “ wholly unto his Spirit, and trusting
 “ nothing to thy former studying or me-

* It is not intended by us to adopt the sentiment
 of a liberty to determine or choose the text ; that, as
 well as the exposition, ought to be left to the dic-
 tates of the Holy Spirit. See the whole section in
 R. B.'s Apology.

“ ditation ;

“ meditation ; but saying with thyself, in
 “ great confidence of the divine promise,
 “ The Lord will give a word with much
 “ power unto those that preach the gos-
 “ pel. But, above all things, be careful
 “ thou follow not the manner of hypo-
 “ crites, who have written almost word
 “ for word what they are to say, as if they
 “ were to repeat some verses upon a thea-
 “ tre, having learned all their preaching
 “ as they do that act tragedies. And af-
 “ terwards, when they are in the place of
 “ prophesying, pray the Lord to direct
 “ their tongue ; but in the mean time,
 “ shutting up the way of the Holy Spirit,
 “ they determine to say nothing but what
 “ they have written. O unhappy kind of
 “ prophets, yea, and truly cursed, which
 “ depend not upon God’s Spirit, but upon
 “ their own writings or meditation ! Why
 “ prayest thou to the Lord thou false pro-
 “ phet, to give thee his Holy Spirit, by
 “ which thou mayest speak things profita-
 “ ble, and yet thou repellst the Spirit ?
 “ Why preferrest thou thy meditation or
 “ study to the Spirit of God ? otherwise,
 “ why committest thou not thyself to the
 “ Spirit ?”

“ Sect. 22. That there is a necessity of
 “ this inward retirement of the mind as
 “ previous

" previous to prayer, that the Spirit may
 " be felt to draw thereunto, appears, for
 " that in most of those places where prayer
 " is commanded, watching is prefixed
 " thereunto, as necessary to go before, as
 " Mat. xxiv. 42. Mark xiii. 33. and xiv.
 " 38. Luke xxi. 36. from which it is evi-
 " dent, that this watching was to go before
 " prayer. Now to what end is this watch-
 " ing, or what is it, but a waiting to feel
 " God's Spirit to draw unto prayer, that
 " so it may be done acceptably? For since
 " we are to pray always in the Spirit, and ^{Eph. 6.}
 " cannot pray of ourselves without it ac- _{18.}
 " ceptably, this watching must be for this
 " end recommended to us, as preceding
 " prayer, that we may watch and wait for
 " the seasonable time to pray, which
 " when the Spirit moves thereunto."

F I N I S.